

SR-710 Tunnel Technical Study  
Glendale Community Meeting Summary  
May 27, 2009  
Glendale Public Library  
6:30 – 8:30 pm

## INTRODUCTION

On May 27, 2009, Caltrans held a community meeting to inform community stakeholders about the SR-710 Tunnel Technical Study. The meeting took place at the Glendale Public Library in Glendale, CA. Approximately 40 community members attended.

SR-710 Study Team members who attended included the following project management staff from Caltrans: Deborah Harris, Chief, Media Relations and Public Affairs; Abdi Saghafi, SR-710 Tunnel Technical Study Project Manager; Maria Raptis, Public Information Officer; and Pratheep Piratheepan, Geotechnical Lead.

Other Study Team members who participated in the meeting were: Ayman Salama and Yoga Chandran of CH2MHILL; Steve Klein of Jacob Engineering; Bruce Shell of Earth Mechanics; Glenda Silva of The Sierra Group (TSG); Rena Salcedo, Debbie Rusas and Joann Olora of GCAP Services; and Katherine Padilla, John Limon and Thelma Herrera, of Katherine Padilla & Associates.

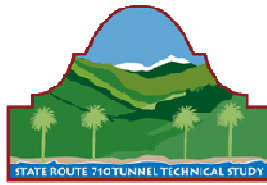
## MEETING FORMAT

The meeting began at 6:30 pm with an informal Open House. There were informational displays set up around the room that depicted a range of topics, including: The Study Background and Public Involvement Process; The Technical Advisory Committee and the Steering Committee, both of which provide Study oversight; research methodologies of The Exploration Program; examples of subsurface soil and rock samples that are being collected as part of the Study; and modern tunnel building techniques. The Open House format provided community members with the opportunity to ask questions and engage in one-on-one conversations with knowledgeable Study Team Members.

The Presentation portion of the meeting was convened at approximately 7:15 pm. The audience was welcomed by Doug Failing, Caltrans District 7 Director.

Mr. Failing explained the goal of the Feasibility Study, which was to determine if a tunnel was technically possible to complete in the San Gabriel Valley. He informed attendees that once information regarding feasibility of a tunnel was available, a decision would be made as to whether they should proceed and do an environmental document or not.

Mr. Failing introduced elected official representatives in attendance: Glendale Councilmember Ari Najarian; Chang Lee from the Glendale Planning Commission; California Transportation Commissioner Larry Zarian; and Joseph Solis representing Senator Carol Liu's office.



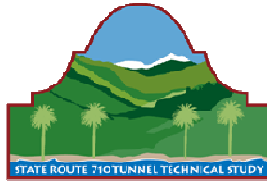
The meeting was then turned over to Glendale Councilmember Ari Najarian, who extended compliments to Doug Failing of Caltrans. Mr. Najarian mentioned that we forgot to introduce Bill Weisman, who is with the Glendale Transportation & Parking Commission and was also taking notes. He stated that the tunnel connector idea is a good strategic move by Caltrans and that when it connects to the I-210 Freeway, it will have an impact on Pasadena, La Canada Flintridge, and Glendale. He explained that (during the meeting) they were going to hear from technical tunneling experts about tunnel feasibility. Mr. Najarian encouraged the community to provide their input or concerns about such issues as traffic, air quality, and particulate matter that may result from a tunnel. He stressed that now was the time to let us know whether they agreed or disagreed and that it was time for business owners, commuters, etc. to listen and formulate an opinion and vocalize. Lastly, he informed them that a Metro tunnel study was completed previously and it was sent back because they did not think it was extensive enough. He said that they gave the responsibility to Caltrans to evaluate the technical aspect of tunnel feasibility and to expand the study to include cities that were not directly affected, such as La Cañada Flintridge and Glendale. He then urged Glendale to offer their input now because in 3 years from now, it may not have as much of an impact.

Following Mr. Najarian's comments, Doug Failing also encouraged attendees to provide input. Mr. Failing reminded attendees that they were focusing on a geotechnical study at this time. He also made it clear that although they had not started an environmental document, and questions that could not be answered at the time were still welcomed. He added that such question would be captured so they could be addressed if they were to proceed with an environmental document. Mr. Failing then introduced Caltrans and Metro staff, as well as the Technical and Outreach Team members present.

The meeting was turned over to Katherine Padilla, who welcomed the audience and reviewed the purpose of the meeting. Katherine reviewed the ground rules for conduct during the meeting, especially during the Question & Answer component and stressed the importance of two-way communication. Additionally, Katherine stated that questions, answers and comments are the point where we really need to hear from the audience.

Steve Klein and Yoga Chandran, part of the Study Team's geotechnical experts, then provided a PowerPoint presentation that described the Study purpose and process; geological factors and their influence on tunnels; modern tunnel systems in Madrid, Shanghai, and Paris; and The Exploration Program that is currently underway to determine subsurface soil, rock and other geological conditions within the Study Area. A summary of exploration activities completed was provided for each zone.

Following the geotechnical presentation, the notification process, including door-to-door outreach to neighborhoods adjacent to the exploration sites, was also described. The public involvement process for the study was reviewed, indicating frequency and timeframe for Steering and Technical Advisory Committee meetings, community meetings, newsletters, presentations, and reports. Meeting dates for the next Steering and Technical Advisory Committees were provided. The Study information office location and contact number was also provided. Finally, the following guiding



principles agreed on by the study committees were provided: focus on the geotechnical aspects of the study; respect route neutrality; and to keep the community informed about the study.

## COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

After the presentation, community members participated in a Question & Answer session. Mr. Failing and members of the Study Team listened, sometimes asking questions for clarification, and responded. The session was facilitated by Katherine Padilla. Topics discussed included: exploration activities; the cost of the Study, potential costs of tunneling and possible sources of funding; concerns about faults, and potential alternatives to tunneling.

The questions and comments offered by community members are categorized and appear below. Responses from Caltrans Director Failing and Study Team Members are indicated in italics.

### Study and Related Costs

- In the mid-May meeting in front of the Glendale City Council there were comments made about the Tunnel reducing traffic on the 210 freeway. Do you have the study with that information?

*That study was made by Nat Reed. The traffic study would be important in the environmental document. It is a great question, but it is a premature question for the scope of this project. Tunnel Technical Feasibility Study is our focus along with route neutrality.*

- We have been told that an existing study was done. If we could review that, maybe it would aid us in being supportive.

*Yes, I know, but I want to maintain my commitment to the Elected Officials by staying with route neutrality and Tunnel Technical Feasibility.*

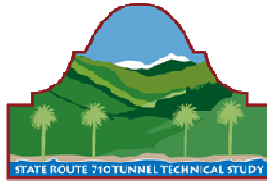
- Why does the freeway need to be extended? Who will need to be traveling on that freeway?

*That is a great question for an environmental study down the road. We would look at various alternatives, modeling during the scoping that would be made during the environmental document phase.*

*When asked, when this question could be answered and by whom, Doug Failing replied that he made a personal commitment to the elected officials about what we would do or would not do concerning the study.*

- Can you please tell us what the costs are for the study? Is there any way to get this study stopped and money transferred to another project?

*CH2MHILL's amount is \$5.3 million for 2 years. The Sierra Group is \$900,000 for 2 years for Public Outreach, which is less than \$7 million for the whole study. This is the #1 project identified to have*



*the greatest benefit in this region. We need to continue to pave forward with projects of importance for this region.*

- I am assuming that the summary report is due by September 2009. Will this include or make recommendations about which of the zones would be the best route?

*I don't anticipate that we select a zone in this study; however we will be able to eliminate zones or areas based on geological data. Zone selection will be a part of the environmental document.*

### Faults

- Are there trucks allowed in the tunnel in Versailles? How many faults does it cross?

*We don't believe that trucks are allowed in the tunnel in Versailles. There are two faults in Zone 3; one is active and the other is potentially active. A number of Metro subway tunnels cross active faults. There are certain ways that you can design a tunnel to absorb movement of a fault.*

- In 1987, the Whittier earthquake uncovered the Elysian fault. I don't hear anything about this fault. Can you comment on that?

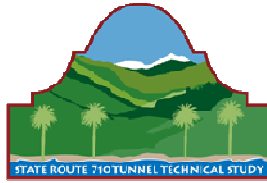
*Since 1987, various scientists have attributed the Whittier earthquake to five other locations and there is some question about whether the Elysian Fault caused it. There are a couple of issues that we are interested in when it comes to faults; one is ground shaking and the other is fault displacement. With the specific faults that we are dealing with, we are interested in the impact by fault displacement. The earthquakes that cause the big shaking occur at depths of 10-15 miles underground, so when you are at the surface it does not matter if you are here versus there because the shaking will be about the same. The Elysian Fault is on a threshold that does not come up any closer to the surface than about 1-2 miles and the tunnel would be at 200 feet, so that would not be an issue to us.*

### Borings

- Why weren't borings done in La Canada Flintridge and Glendale? What was the size of boring holes?

*The size of borings were 4-6" in diameter. The focus of the exploration was to look at areas that a tunnel might be completed in and the cities of La Canada Flintridge and Glendale were outside of these areas. The borings were conducted in areas adjacent and we did not see the need to complete borings in La Canada Flintridge and Glendale at this time.*

- You mentioned that groundwater levels are at 50 – 150 foot level in Zones 4 and 5, but there was no mention about groundwater levels in other zones and how that may impact developing those routes. Can you talk about that?



*Zones 4 and 5 have been studied by the Department of Water Resources because they are Superfund sites and consequently there is existing information about the groundwater table. We do have some data for Zones 1, 2, and 3 about groundwater conditions. For example, in Zone 1 the groundwater table is from 50 – 100 feet below surface. As we move into bedrock formations, we do not have any data; however we may be able to predict the depth of groundwater. Zone 2 has a similar groundwater table to Zone 1. Outside of this, we do not have any more data. That doesn't mean that we will not study the other zones. When we do get this information, we will provide it to you.*

Does the data that you have now suggest that there are problems for using Zones 1, 2, and 3?

*At this time, we can not say that. Groundwater tables do not make any zone more attractive than others. It is not a concern from a tunneling perspective. We are still collecting data and will compile it for more detailed information.*

### **Route Neutral Study**

- What is the phrase route neutral? What does that mean?

*Freight rail is something that is done in the planning studies. The general numbers have always been if your trip is less than 400 yards/miles, it is more efficient to send by truck. We are looking at a lot of ways to improve truck traffic. This doesn't dissipate a need for a route neutral 710 project. Route neutral is a good thorough study that looked at the ability to do tunneling across the San Gabriel Valley from a technical perspective. It really means that in our discussion, I am not looking at only one specific route. In this case, we have broken areas down into zones. We want to see if we can tunnel within these zones and if there is a problem, we want to determine if it is insurmountable. If it is not insurmountable, is there something that we need to be aware of that may cost us money if we were to go forward into an environmental document.*

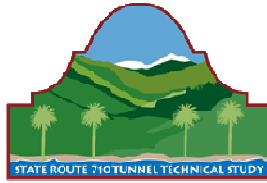
- Is a route chosen before the EIR stage or during the EIR stage? From this moment today, how long could you expect before a tunnel is constructed?

*A purpose and a need must be identified before the EIR phase. A route is defined during the EIR. This is going to be a strictly hypothetical answer to the question. Assume that tunneling is feasible, it can take 3 years for the environmental document phase. Assuming that we are using a design-build contract, it would take about 4-5 years before tunneling could start. It would take 1.5 years from environmental phase to beginning to build a tunnel.*

### **Tunnel**

- What happens to air that has to be exhausted?

*The air will have to be discharged either at the end of the tunnel or at points in between. There are some tunnels that have scrubbers which reduce toxins. At this point, it is premature to discuss. There are technologies available, as well as detailed ventilation systems.*



- I am an architect and civil engineer. I have visited cities around the world and they have circles. Beijing uses 6 of them. If you go from A to B, you don't need to go through the centers. Isn't the most logical way to get an underground expansion to Pasadena? Also regarding the exhaust, you can always drill through the mountains and release it into the Mohave Desert. Technology is there to drill under anything.

*Yes, the shortest distance between two points is a straight line; however I told Congressman Schiff that I would stick to a route neutral study. It is a personal commitment I made to him. (Doug Failing)*

- I thought that it was said that a tunnel could be built anywhere? Who is going to make the determination that we are going to move this process forward?

*Knowing problems in advance can assist us. Caltrans and Metro could play a role in making a decision. There was some discussion of a JPA (Joint Powers Authority) with communities in the area. Decision not made yet.*

## Outreach

- My concern is the way the public outreach is being done. I heard nothing about these meetings until 1 week ago. My friend also just heard about this a week ago. Who decides who would be contacted about these meetings? I do not feel that this was adequate.

*We contacted all presidents of the Glendale Homeowners Associations to inform them of upcoming meetings. We would welcome the opportunity to develop an Outreach Plan that incorporates your input for the next round of community meetings.*

## Environmental Document

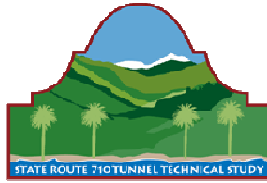
- Is the money currently in place for the environmental report?

*We are not doing an environmental document at this time and that is not the object of what we are studying. There are sources that could be used: Measure R identified money for the 710 corridor as well as \$2 million in the State Budget, should an environmental document be pursued.*

- I heard a figure of \$81,000,000 for the EIR study?

*Until I get more information, I don't feel comfortable confirming whether there was money set aside for that study. That number was not generated by Caltrans and I don't know where it came from.*

- Is the estimated cost of a tunnel \$1 billion dollars?



*An EIR document equals 10% of the project contingent upon the environment. The cost of the tunnel could be \$100,000,000 (one hundred million dollars). We were provided examples of projects of varying scopes that have varying costs.*

## Other

- Emergency phones within the tunnel? Would cell phones work within a tunnel?

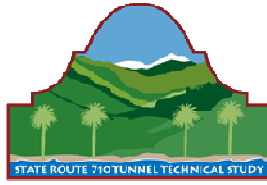
*Private companies maintain phones. Los Angeles County Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (LA SAFE) is administered through Metro for emergency phones on the freeways. There were a lot of issues due to vandalism and the solution was to set up a wireless system. The use of these has dropped considerably with the usage of personal cell phones. A number of modern tunnels do allow for cell phone coverage. That is a decision that we would have to make and would consider it if cell phone companies would pay us some money. Direct wired phones into the control booths for emergency services would be available in the tunnel. Repeaters are installed in large tunnels. These are decisions that would be made later, along with matters such as cost effectiveness, etc.*

- They put the trains underground on Alameda. Instead of more cars on the road, we need trains to replace the truck traffic.

*Yes, the Alameda Corridor goes underground to the 91 freeway, under Compton Creek to the rail yards.*

## COMMENTS

- Thank you for being here and providing us with this information. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting that I have been to. You are trying to restrict geotechnical, which is a Catch 22. People are most concerned with the impact. There is a little skepticism regarding route neutrality. If you do a google search for this, you come up with a number of hits that are suggestive that this not route neutral. This tunnel is the proposed solution for commuters and trucks from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. I would like to address using rails instead of trucks. Rail is more than twice as efficient at moving cargo. Rail is not always useful for perishable goods and just-in-time goods. Many of the products transported by trucks are excellent candidates for rail. People in Crescenta Valley have already made huge sacrifices in building the 210 freeway. Hundreds of homes were taken by eminent domain. There is a lot of history and this is why you may get a lot of pushback. I am here to advocate for efficiency. Let's not spend billions of dollars unless we are clear about what regional transportation problems we will solve and how we will solve them. A National Freight Strategy.
- The 210 gap was closed several years ago by Caltrans. As a result, we do not have less traffic. The Mayor of La Canada Flintridge said that traffic has increased with the extension of the 210 freeway. Twenty-five percent (25%) of total volume of traffic is increased. I don't call that mobility, I call that gridlock. Level of Service "F" is not mobility.



## CONCLUSION

The meeting concluded at 8:30 pm. At the meeting conclusion, Katherine Padilla thanked the community of Glendale for their participation and assured them that they would be kept informed throughout the Study. She also informed the audience of upcoming Steering and Technical Advisory Committee meetings, as well as upcoming community meetings in Monterey Park, City of San Marino and northeast communities in the City of Los Angeles.